



## A Bartender's Vantage Point

Posted by [Pierluigi Oliverio](#) on Monday, November 29, 2010

The Public Safety, Finance And Strategic Support Committee took up the topic of unnecessary force in conjunction with drunk-in-public arrests. The police department along with the city auditor, city manager and Independent Police Auditor spent approximately 500 hours going through paper to pull out data. Inherently, a paper system is cumbersome and takes time to extrapolate data. Although we have a records management system, it is antiquated and unable to make queries that a modern system would, and it was not set up to manage certain historic data.

This issue is indicative of our city's lack of investment in information technology.

There are many times that we ask for specific data sliced in a certain way and/or queried a particular way, yet the deliverable borders on impossible or extremely difficult. Then, if we are to get the data, the lag time is so long, it is sometimes obsolete. There is a legitimate need for upgrading information technology in our City—but there are few dollars. Staff put in a great effort but should spend their time on more pertinent public safety matters.

I never came out and accused the police of racial profiling or excessive force. Rather I walked our Downtown late at night and saw that club patrons did not mirror the San Jose population as a whole. Or put another way, the night time crowd did not match the Turkey Trot crowd. So if drunk-in-public arrests downtown did not exactly mirror the population of San Jose that made sense to me.

I was a bartender for more than ten years, as it was my second job on top of my day job. I can say, with good authority, that when people drink excessively they have poor judgement. They may get silly, argumentative and sadly belligerent to anyone around them. It did not make a difference if the person was blue collar or white collar; I would see people transform over the evening and sometimes in a negative way. Several times at the end of the night I would see that problematic individual arrested for doing something dumb, in

Downtown San Jose and Los Gatos. For the record, a majority of the belligerents in Los Gatos were Caucasian, which coincidentally mirrors the Los Gatos bar scene.

Also, if you are a police officer assigned to an entertainment district, you encounter different situations than you would in a neighborhood. Therefore, you make arrests that are different from other officers. If one officer has the Almaden Valley neighborhood during the day and another has the Downtown at night, it is completely different. So calling out certain officers that have too many arrests of a certain category or arresting a certain type of person does not make sense. We have to take into consideration all other factors including demographics.

Most police officers I have met are polite, but when faced with a belligerent, intoxicated person, police need to manage the situation according to their training. Basic Rule: If you want to be treated with respect, show respect.

Good luck to the Willow Glen Rams varsity football team as they face the Sequoia High Ravens of Redwood City for the Division 2 CCS final championship game. Game time is 3pm Saturday at San Jose City College. Go Rams!

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